

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the time and consideration that the Examiner has provided in reviewing this application. By the above amendment, claim 1 has been amended.

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION DATED DECEMBER 12, 2006

In the Office Action dated December 12, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7-9 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hidaka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,095,970). The Examiner also stated that claim 10 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the recognition of allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-3 and 7-14 as amended are allowable over all of the cited art and that the present amendment should be entered.

First, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of the mounting adapter consisting of two concentric coincident cylinder elements having different radii which are interconnected via an adapter plate which is formed on a front side of both cylinder elements such that a cavity in the form of a circle segment is formed between the cylinder elements which segment is divided into three sections by radial ribs, wherein the three sections comprise receiving means respectively for receiving bending elements for tilting the endoscope head relative to the endoscope shaft. Support for this limitation can be found at least in the description on page 5 of the application.

In general, one important feature of the invention is the design of the mounting adapter itself, especially the concentric arrangement of the two cylinder elements 8, 9. The invention comprises three bending elements in the form of hydraulic operated bellows, allowing a tilting of the head in all directions for visual exploring the inner wall of an intestine. The bending elements must be fixed at their axial end faces in order to transfer the bending force from the endoscope shaft to the head. Additionally, in order to guarantee a uniform bending motion, the three bending elements have to be symmetrically located along the circumference of the mounting adapter. For that reason the inner cylinder element 8 providing the hydraulic connection and the outer cylinder element 9 are concentric with each other. Finally, the inner cylinder element 8 and the outer cylinder element 9 are linked together by radial ribs 12 for mechanically reinforcing the whole structure.

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, the Applicant submits that independent claim 1, and all claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are not anticipated by any reference.

Because claim 1 is patentable, claims 2-3 and 7-14 are patentable as dependent from patentable base claims. *See* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Reconsideration of those claims is respectfully requested. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102 rejections.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, and in view of the remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the application and the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request favorable consideration and the timely allowance of all pending claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments have not added any new matter to the application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees (or credit any overpayment) associated with this communication to our Deposit Account No. 13-0019. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Friedman', is written over a horizontal line.

Victoria Friedman
Registration No. 58,853

CUSTOMER NUMBER 26565
MAYER, BROWN, ROWE & MAW LLP
P.O. Box 2828
Chicago, IL 60690-2828
Telephone: (312) 701-8178
Facsimile: (312) 706-9000